



The Old Ironsides Report

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Playing by the fundamentals gives Iraqis 73-52 victory over U.S. team

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BAGHDAD, Iraq – The crowd roared as soldiers from 501st Forward Support Battalion (FSB) jogged out of the locker room and took to the court for a scrimmage against the Iraqi national basketball team Wednesday.

The Iraqi national team, with an organized and fundamentally sound approach to the game, took the victory over the Americans 73-52.

The friendly competition was the first of its kind in Iraq.

"It went pretty well," said Capt. Milt Kelly, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 501st FSB, and head coach of the U.S. team. "I am surprised that we did this well in the short amount of time we had to put the team together."

The U.S. team, which consisted entirely of volunteers, was able to practice only a handful of times before the game against a team that has been practicing and preparing for this match for two months.

"We have to hand it to the Iraqis. They played well together, were disciplined, had good teamwork and executed good decision making," said Kelly.

The game's underlying benefits are competitive practice on the court for the Iraqi national team, and a chance to blow off steam and have fun for the soldiers on the court and in the bleachers, said Kelly.

The popularity of basketball in the States accounted for such decent competition against a professional team, said center Capt. Tom Duncan, executive officer for the 628th Forward Surgical Team, an Army Reserve unit from San Antonio, Texas.

"Kids grow up watching the NBA and they want to be like them," Duncan said.

"They (the Iraqis) want to play against us regularly, once a week," said Duncan. "The more we play, the better we are going to get."

All the players involved with the game expressed thanks for being able to participate in the program, and are chomping at the bit for a rematch.

"Anytime you can come out and put a team together and get out on the court and have a good time, you can't help but bring smiles," said Kelly.



U.S. soldiers double-team an Iraqi national player as he drives toward the basket. The soldiers' speed gave them an advantage over the Iraqi players on the defensive end. However, the Iraqi team walked away the winners defeating the 1st Armored Division pick-up team 73-52 Tuesday night.

TODAY'S WEATHER

High: 108F/42C

Low: 77F/25C



NEWS

Supreme Court Strikes Down Gay Sex Ban

WASHINGTON (AP) - The Supreme Court struck down a ban on gay sex Thursday, ruling that the law was an unconstitutional violation of privacy. The 6-3 ruling reverses course from a ruling 17 years ago that states could punish homosexuals for what such laws historically called deviant sex.

Alleged Saudi Bombing Leader Said Caught

WASHINGTON (AP) - Authorities have arrested a man alleged to be an al-Qaida mastermind of the May 12 terrorist bombings in Riyadh, U.S. and Saudi officials said Thursday. Ali Abd al-Rahman al-Faqasi al-Ghamdi surrendered to Saudi police, according to an official with the Saudi interior ministry, according to state-run Radio Riyadh.

Militants Increase Attacks in Mideast

JERUSALEM (AP) - Palestinian militants stepped up violence against Israelis on Thursday, dispatching bombers and a teenage gunman even as Palestinian officials and militia leaders discussed the time and place to announce a three-month halt in attacks. The announcement was expected ahead of the arrival this weekend of National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, Palestinian officials said.

Woman Found Guilty in 'Windshield' Case

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) - A jury took less than an hour Thursday to convict a former nurse's aide of murder for hitting a homeless man with her car, driving home with his mangled body jammed in the windshield and leaving him to die in her garage. Chante Jawan Mallard, 27, looked down and cried silently as the judge read the verdict. The jury was to return in the afternoon to begin hearing evidence in the sentencing phase. She could get up to life in prison.

Army, MIT developing body armor using spider silk

How do you milk a spider?

"Very, very carefully," according to Gareth McKinley, a professor of mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and one of the leaders of a team of MIT scientists working with the Army's Institute for Soldier Nanotechnology.

Together, MIT and the Army are working on a program to develop a new "Soldier Suit" — a high-tech uniform that can perform a host of functions, such as adapting to different temperatures and even delivering limited medical care to sick or wounded soldiers. The research under way at MIT is what government types call "blue skies," meaning technologies that are at least 15 to 20 years away from becoming reality.

SPORTS

LeBron James Chosen No. 1 in NBA Draft

NEW YORK (AP) - LeBron James was chosen No. 1 in the NBA draft Thursday night and strode onstage wearing an all-white suit, appropriate garb for a player expected to be the savior of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

James, the 18-year-old prep phenom from Akron, hugged his agent, Aaron Goodwin, then turned and did the same to his mother, Gloria, before pulling on a Cavaliers cap and shaking the hand of commissioner David Stern.

And in other news:

Ex-Iraqi Info Minister Resurfaces

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) - The former Iraqi information minister, who gained notoriety during the war for wildly implausible claims of victory, showed up on Arab television Thursday - his first appearance since the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. In an interview with Al-Arabiya satellite network, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf claimed he had surrendered to American forces, was questioned and let go.

Chaplain's thought for the day:

To render ourselves insensible to pain we must forfeit also the possibilities of happiness.
--Sir John Lubbock

A caterpillar knows instinctively that it must spin a cocoon. When finished it will use the protection it has made to turn itself into a beautiful butterfly. When the time is right, the butterfly will break through the cocoon and stretch its wings to meet the world.

We sometimes protect ourselves by withdrawing into a cocoon of our own. We stop talking to others and find ourselves growing lonely and longing for our friends. Perhaps it was some pain that made us retreat, but the pain of loneliness is greater. When we have the courage to break out of our cocoon, knowing and accepting the fact that we will experience both pain and happiness, we will change. We will become, for that moment, something new and beautiful like the butterfly.

What fearful thing do I have the courage to face today?